

## [Character Description]

Name: Jane K. Leary, 32 Acorn St.

Informant: Patrick J. Ryan, 152 Jackson St.

Assignment: The Shoe Machinery Worker of Lynn

Section 14

July 20, '39 [Mass.?] [1939-9?]

JUL [8?] - 1939

### CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

This informant is a stoutish old man of a little more than average height, with hair of non-descript color that has perhaps once been blond, with well worn clothes which the contours of his body have bulged into a shoddy appearance of comfort. His shoulders are a bit round, but he walks straight.

The kitchen and dining room of this home have in them the necessary furniture accessories, but besides there is an old easy chair with a concave center in its cushion seat. There is the small stand within reach, littered with newspapers and religious and poultry periodicals. On the dining room table too is some of this overflow of reading material, for these people eat in the kitchen, except on state occasions.

There's a rocking chair in the kitchen — the sort that Grandma usually rooks a baby in, and herded tightly together on the top of the sewing machine are potted plants in all stages of growth — from bare slips to ferny luxuriance.

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Only the parlor keeps its best foot forward. Here is a stylish suit e, two or three pictures, pretty lamps and a piano. But the pieces stand too starkly at attention in there and a glance reveals that therein is not the real living of the household. There is not here, as in the rest of the house the casual living comfort that jumps up from the rooms and embraces the caller.

This house is a home.

1

“What'll I ever get for supper tonight?”

“Well, you know mother [Mother?] , I eat anything.”

“Yes, I know. You ain't hard ta feed. I b ' lieve you'd eat shoe leather if I wuz ta set it before ya. I never knowed a man easier ta feed.”

“Well why don't ya feed her the same thing.”

“Well, you know now, Pop, she works hard. We'd oughta give her something she'd like. But I'll tell ya now, sometimes; I wisht I knowed what ta get her fer supper. She sure is particular what she eats.”

My informant and his wife were speaking of their daughter, who works in the shoe machinery corporation as an inspector, the very same who had so many silk dresses that “it was a sin.”

“Well, I'll tell ya one thing she does like an' they got it down to the store at the corner. I won't havta wait for the butcher then or go down town either. We kin have that tonight.”

“What's that?”

“Hot Dogs.”

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It was a very warm day, and I could see reluctance struggle in the face of my informant's wife, to brave the hot sun even as far as the corner variety store.

"I'll go," said her husband.

"No you won't neither. You stay right here on this piazza. I ain't gonna have you get no sunstroke in this hot sun."

She seemed relieved when I told her I'd gladly go, although it took a bit of insisting before I secured her grateful permission.

2

"It's jest down ta the corner. Ask them fur a pound a hot dogs fur Mrs. ——"

When I returned there was a bag of "nice fresh eggs fur you. No I won't take no fur an answer. Your agonna take 'em. There good fur your children. A nice fresh egg a day, I say, is what makes folks good an' strong. An' some folks even need more. Take him. (she pointed to her husband who was smiling approval of her gift.) He eats his three every morning, he does. Give him eggs, an' a cup a coffee and some brand bread an' butter an' he's satisfied, any time. I never had no trouble feedin' him.

"Well, Mother, I wun't make you no trouble if I wuzn't satisfied but I always am. You're a good cook. An' you always took good care a me.

"An' you always took good care a me.

"I aim ta keep on. Your all I got ta take care of now, ain't ya?"

He turned to me and reminisced while his wife went indoors to prepare the supper.

"Me and Mother's been through some pretty hard times in our time. But we always got by, 'cause we stuck together. There's always a way, if two people want ta look fur it.

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“An' ya kin get by on mighty little, if ya have to and got sence ta see what's the most important things in life. We din't let the hard times get us down.

“An' now we don't ask fur much. We got enough ta get along 3 on, an' we got each other. That should be enough ta make anybody happy.”

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“My garden ain't all out this year. I cun't do it myself and my sons ain't got much time either, after they work all day, ta come over here and work it fur me. An' Mother ain't able either. So next year I think I'll go over ta that fella across the street and ask him if he wants ta put it out fur himself. He's got a growing family ant could use it. Yes sir, that's jest what I'm agonna do next year, if I'm still here. I hope I will be. It's good ta be alive.”

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